



# Talbot Hotel

Malton



## A BRIEF HISTORY

BY WILL SWALES



# WELCOME

Welcome to a brief history of The Talbot Hotel, Malton. During the late spring and early summer of 2016 we had the good fortune to be able to revitalise and refurbish one of our fabulous sister inns, The King's Head in Richmond, North Yorkshire.

During the planning stage of this project we started to look hard at the building and its many historical attributes, at how some parts of the building had been added during its 300 years of existence. And whilst contemplating the small changes and additions we wanted to make, it dawned on me that we will only be its custodians for a generation or two at most. I can't foretell who will follow but started thinking about who had been its keepers in the past.

Therefore, we asked a good friend if he would research The King's Head and try to separate the fact from the fable; what's true and what has been elaborated during the storytelling process over the years.

Will Swales made such a good job of The King's Head that we then asked him to complete the same task for The Talbot Hotel.

What follows is that research. We think it's as accurate as can be, but naturally there are many gaps and we would welcome any additional information.

I hope you enjoy this small booklet and the hospitality and service we provide within The Talbot Hotel. Please feel free to take this copy with you.



**Kevin Charity**  
**Managing Director**  
**The Coaching Inn Group**

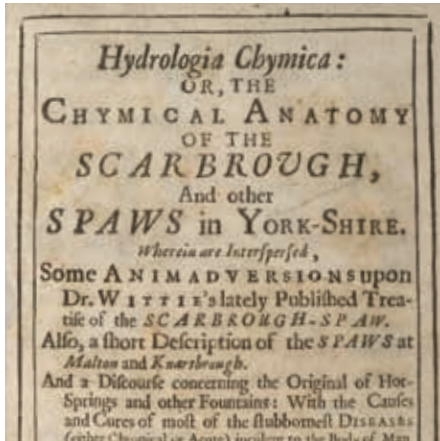
**[www.coachinginngroup.co.uk](http://www.coachinginngroup.co.uk)**



**“THE TALBOT HOTEL IS INSEPARABLE  
FROM THE EARLY SPORTING  
HISTORY OF MALTON.”**



## TRAVELLERS' REST BOOSTED BY SPA AND RACE MEETINGS

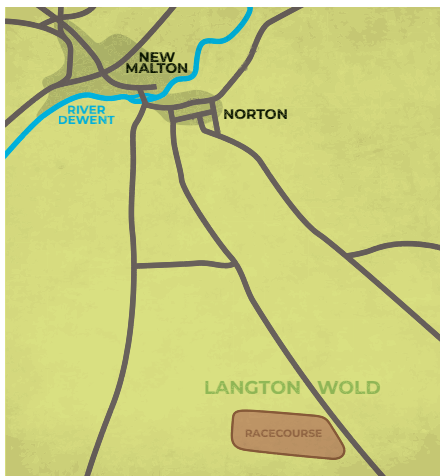


The earliest reference to Malton Spa is in a treatise published in 1669: 'Hydrologia Chymica, or the Chymical Anatomy of the Scarborough and other Spaws in York-Shire', which included a 'Short Description of the Spaws at Malton and Knarsbrough'. Image courtesy York Minster Collections, © Chapter of York: reproduced by permission.

The death of Oliver Cromwell, the return from exile of Charles Stuart, and his restoration as King Charles II in 1660, heralded a nationwide economic boom with notable benefits for the Yorkshire town of Malton.

Located at an important crossroads, about 30 miles from the coast, it was already an established overnight stop for travellers heading to and from the county's principal ports of Whitby, Scarborough, Bridlington, and Hull. By 1660, Malton, formally New Malton, was probably also known for its rare health-giving mineral spring, or 'spa', located just outside the town, in a field close to the River Derwent and only a short walk from what is now The Talbot Hotel.

Most importantly for Malton, the restoration of the monarchy prompted a revival of horse racing – the 'sport of kings' – previously banned by Cromwell. References to formal race meetings at Malton date from 1686 meetings but were probably held earlier. By 1692 the location of the Malton course is identified as at Langton Wold, about a mile and a half south of the town, on what was at that time an expanse of open common.



Malton Racecourse was south of the town, on the open common of Langton Wold.

## MANSIONS FOR SPORTING ELITE

Local nobility and gentry embraced the revival of horseracing with such enthusiasm that in addition to hosting races, Malton quickly developed as a leading centre for racehorse breeding and training.

It also became a popular base for all field sports associated with the well-off – especially fox hunting and hare coursing, which was the early form of greyhound racing. Visiting sportsmen, including racehorse owners and their trainers from all around the country, had to be accommodated during the various sporting events, which typically ran for three or more days. At such times, large private houses, including the elegant mansion that today forms the core of The Talbot Hotel, were filled with guests.

# STRICKLAND FAMILY MANSION

**Records survive to show that on the site of the Talbot Hotel, in the street called Yorkersgate, there was a large house as early as 1599. Elements of that structure might survive today within the fabric, especially in the extensive cellars.**

The modern history of the house begins during the period of the revival of horseracing. In 1672 it was bought from a local dignitary by Sir William Strickland, baronet, whose family seat was 25 miles away at Boynton Hall, near Bridlington. It was presumably purchased to be the baronet's base for his family's regular visits to Malton to enjoy the town's sporting delights. But for him, the pleasure was all too brief. He died a year later. His son and heir, Sir Thomas Strickland, 2nd baronet, died 11 years later, in 1684, when the title and estates went to his son and heir, 19-year-old Sir William Strickland, the 3rd baronet.



Sir William Strickland, 3rd baronet (1665-1724), portrait by circle of Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723). Photograph by kind permission of Mrs Sally Marriott of Boynton Hall.

## SIR WILLIAM THE 3<sup>RD</sup> BARONET

**The young Strickland's inheritance came only a few months after his marriage to Elizabeth Palmes, daughter and heiress of William Palmes, the lord of the manor of Malton, who lived 50 miles away in the West Riding.**

Sir William and Lady Elizabeth Strickland established their marital home in Malton, effectively becoming the resident lord and lady of the manor. But instead of using Strickland's existing family mansion in the town, they took on another grand old house, two doors away, which they extensively remodelled in the architectural style of the day. This was York House, now considered one of England's best-preserved houses of that period. The Strickland family mansion's continued use as a guest house for visiting friends is indicated by an account of about 100 years later, which described the property in that period as the 'Strickland hunting lodge'.



The 17th-century wrought-iron gates to York House still bear the original decorative overthrow featuring Strickland's initials, WS, enclosed by his wife's maternal family motto, Vince malum bono, 'Defeat evil with good'

## WINNING ON THE TURF... BUT LOSING IN THE TOWN



Detail from a 1730 plan of Malton by John Dickinson, possibly copied from an earlier plan. It's a birds-eye view from the river showing on the left the two-storey Strickland mansion with its two rear-projecting wings. On the right is the rear view of York House. The small building in between the two mansions is now incorporated within The Talbot Hotel. Image courtesy North Yorkshire County Record Office (Ref: ZPB III 5/2/1), reproduced by permission of the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate.

**Sir William Strickland was a noted owner and breeder of racehorses, and a leading patron and sometime steward of the Malton races held at Langton Wold.**

At the more famous course at Newmarket, in Suffolk, Strickland's horse 'Merlin' won a notorious two-horse race, thought to have been held in 1702 and billed as a battle between the best horses of the north and the south, the latter put up by the royal trainer. Gambling on the outcome was said to involve such huge sums that some wealthy punters were ruined by the result.

Strickland's power in Malton was diminished in 1713 when his father-in-law, William Palmes, owner of the manor of Malton, fell into financial difficulties. The manor, and therefore much of the property in the town, was sold to Thomas Watson-Wentworth, of Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham in West Yorkshire, who also owned large estates in Ireland and Northamptonshire. Sir William and Lady Elizabeth Strickland could no longer claim to be the local representatives of the lord of the manor.



Detail from a 1728 painting by John Settrington, showing a view looking west along Yorkersgate. The Strickland mansion is the largest house in the far centre. York House is nearer and set back from the road. Reproduced by permission of the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate.

# WATSON-WENTWORTH ACQUIRES THE STRICKLAND MANSION

**In October 1723, the lord of the manor of Malton, Thomas Watson-Wentworth, died, aged 58, and was succeeded by his son, Thomas Watson-Wentworth the 2nd, then aged 29. He had served as one of Malton's two MPs since the age of 22 and was destined for high office.**

Sir William Strickland, 3rd baronet, died in May 1724, aged 59, after falling from his horse while fox hunting near his ancestral seat at Boynton Hall. His title and estates descended to his son and heir, Sir William Strickland, 4th baronet, aged 38, who is thought to have commissioned significant improvements to the family's Malton mansion, destined eventually to become the Talbot Hotel. He also appeared to be on the up. He was MP for Scarborough, having previously served as an MP for Malton. In 1725 he was appointed a junior Lord of the Treasury, and in 1730 became Secretary at War and a privy counsellor.

In 1728, after a year as an MP for the whole of Yorkshire, Thomas Watson-Wentworth the 2nd was elevated to the House of Lords as Baron Malton. In 1734 he was appointed to the higher rank of Earl of Malton. By this time, he had completed the rebuilding of his house at Wentworth Woodhouse, creating a status symbol of the highest order, a stately home with 365 rooms and with the longest façade of any house in England.

Sir William Strickland 4th baronet died, aged 50, in 1735, leaving his title and estates to his six-year-old son and heir. A shock for the late baronet's executors was the scale of his debts, some reportedly attributed to horseracing. The executors were obliged to sell properties and so the Strickland family mansion in Malton was put on the market and bought in 1739 by Thomas Watson-Wentworth, Earl of Malton.



The Earl of Malton, Thomas Watson-Wentworth, of Wentworth Woodhouse, painted by Jonathan Richardson the elder (1667-1745). By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.



Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham, the home of Thomas Watson-Wentworth, Earl of Malton. Courtesy Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, [www.wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk](http://www.wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk).

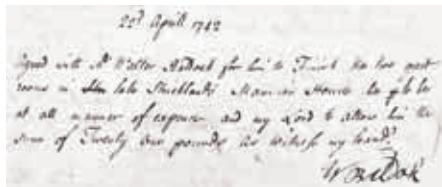
# CONVERSION TO A MODERN HIGH-CLASS COMMERCIAL INN

## BOOMING ECONOMY

By the time of the Earl of Malton's purchase of the old Strickland mansion in 1739, the town's economy was booming at an unprecedented rate.

The opening of the River Derwent Navigation in about 1724 brought, directly to the town, barges carrying bulk loads of up to 50 tons of coal, salt, sugar, groceries, and woollens. They returned with corn, butter, and bacon, destined for Hull, Leeds, Wakefield, and London.

Also, road traffic through the town was rapidly increasing, partly because of the growth of wealthy tourists heading for Scarborough to pursue the new health-promoting craze of summer sea-bathing.



22<sup>d</sup> April 1742  
Agreed with Mr Walter Baldock for him to finish the two great rooms in the late Strickland's mansion in Malton to get to it at a manner of expense and my word to allow him the sum of Twenty five pounds the which my hand  
Waldock

**Above:** An entry in the memorandum book of James Preston noting work to 'finish the two great rooms'. North Yorkshire County Record Office (Ref: ZPB III 5/2/1).

**Right:** Mid-18th-century fireplace and wood panelling in The Talbot lounge, possibly installed in 1742 under the recorded agreement with innkeeper Walter Baldock.

Malton's economic growth no doubt inspired plans drawn up in 1740 to convert the old Strickland mansion into a high-class commercial inn.

The Earl of Malton's agent in the town, James Preston, appointed one of the town's most experienced and respected innkeepers, Walter Baldock, as tenant to oversee the conversion. Since as early as 1722 he had been running what appears to have been Malton's leading posting inn, The Talbot, in Market Street, just around the corner from the Strickland mansion.

In April 1742, an entry in James Preston's memorandum book noted that Walter Baldock was to 'finish the two great rooms', presumably the current lounge and dining room. Possibly they were being fitted out in the modern Georgian style, much of which remains today.

Another entry recorded an agreement with a contractor to build a wall around 'Mr Baldock's new stables', which must have been an earlier version of the long-since-rebuilt stable yard opposite the front of the inn. The completion of all the works to convert the old Strickland mansion to a highly fashionable and exquisitely fitted-out commercial inn can be dated to March 1743 when Walter Baldock started paying a significantly enhanced annual rent of £45.

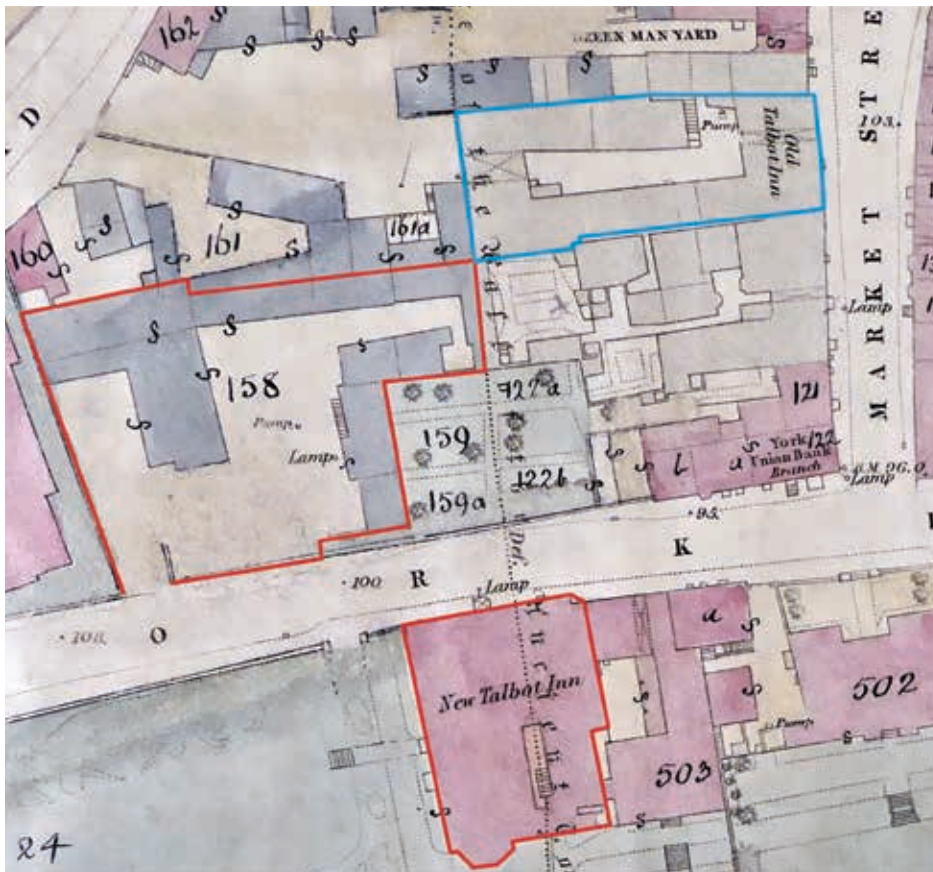




# BALDOCK'S NEW TALBOT INN

Walter Baldock, having given up running The Talbot in Market Street, took its name with him to the Strickland mansion, which became known as 'Walter Baldock's New Talbot Inn'.

This was in keeping with common practice at the time, that the names of innkeepers and their inns were often expressed in combination. Baldock's former house in Market Street henceforth traded as The Old Talbot.

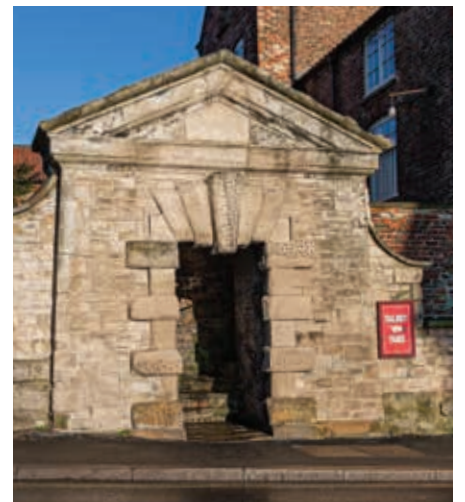


Section from a much later town plan showing the positions of The Old Talbot with its traditional style of rear yard (blue outline), and the much larger New Talbot with its extensive stable yard on the opposite side of the road (red outlines). York House is numbered 502. Base plan courtesy Fitzwilliam Malton Estate.

## THE MYSTERIOUS 'VANBRUGH' ARCH

The pedestrian access to The Talbot Stables, now The Talbot Yard Food Court, is marked by this elegant stone portico, known locally as the Vanbrugh Arch. Its origin and date of erection are unknown, but one idea is that it was the work of John Vanbrugh (1664-1726), architect of the stately homes of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, and of Castle Howard just six miles west of Malton, and that the arch was moved to this position from another original location.

It might have been incorporated into the wall recorded as built around Mr Baldock's new stables in 1742, or perhaps it was in place earlier.



# TALBOT INN AND THE RACES

## EARL TO MARQUESS

Thomas Watson-Wentworth, Earl of Malton, lord of the manor of Malton, and owner of The Talbot, was elevated in the peerage by King George II to the new title of Marquess of Rockingham.

The honour was bestowed in 1746, shortly after Watson-Wentworth inherited the barony of Rockingham, near Corby, Northamptonshire, after the death of a cousin.

In the same year the king put up a prize of 100 guineas for one of the Malton Races. The marquess was the senior steward of the race, and the horses were to be shown and entered in advance at 'Mr Baldock's, the sign of the Talbot'.

**The old Strickland mansion's associations with the horseracing fraternity were not diminished by its conversion to a commercial inn.**

Innkeeper Walter Baldock was himself a racehorse owner, who would later have at least one winner to his name at Langton Wold. Typical scenes in those early years of the inn were imagined by the distinguished writer on horseracing in Yorkshire, Major Jack Fairfax-Blakeborough. In 1925 he wrote:

"The Talbot Hotel – or the New Talbot, as it was originally called – is inseparable from the early sporting history of Malton. It was here owners stayed when they came to see their horses, it was here trainers and others forgathered to revive and carry on the Malton Race fixture, it was here the sporting fraternity drew, knowing they would find congenial company. Many important sales of bloodstock have been arranged in the commodious Talbot, many turf secrets told, many coups arranged, and many a bottle cracked to celebrate them."

## MALTON RACES.

**ONE Hundred Guineas in Specie, given by his Majesty, will be run for on Langton Wolds, near Malton in Yorkshire, on Friday the 14th of August next, by Mares, being no more than five Years old the Grads before they run, as must be certified under the Hands of the Breeder at the Time of Entring; carrying ten Stone, one Heat.**

**To be shewn and entred at Mr. Baldock's, the Sign of the Talbot in New Malton, on Thursday the 13th of August, betwixt the Hours of Ten and Two of the Clock of the same Day; and if any Difference arise either in Entring or Running, the same to be determined by the Rt. Hon. the Marquis of Rockingham, or whom he shall appoint, according to his Majesty's Rules and Orders then and there to be produced.**

The official notice of the King's 100 guineas race at Malton, published in the official public record, The London Gazette, no. 8656, 11 July 1747.



# MARQUESS WAS SAID TO HAVE DROWNED IN CLARET

The famous excesses of the wealthy during this period became the undoing of the Marquess of Rockingham, who died in December 1750, aged 57. According to former prime minister Robert Walpole, he ‘drowned in claret’.

A few months later, in May 1751, Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, celebrated his 21st birthday, inherited his father’s estates, and so became the new owner of The Talbot Inn. He was a passionate racehorse owner and breeder whose power and influence would help to ensure the continued success of horseracing in Malton. More disciplined than his father, he also became a senior political activist in the House of Lords; from 1753 leading a group called the Rockingham Whigs.

## COACHING ERA BEGINS

By 1751, the man in charge of The Talbot was John Baldock, whose brother Walter kept one of York’s three largest inns, indicating that the two men were probably sons of The Talbot’s Walter Baldock.

New roads called ‘turnpikes’, made to high standards and maintained through the collection of tolls, were opening around the country. Leeds and York were linked by turnpikes in 1751, the same year that saw the first move by trustees to establish a turnpike linking York and Scarborough. The 2nd Marquess of Rockingham was the leading landowner involved, and so the first meeting of trustees was held in 1751 ‘at the house of Mr John Baldock, being the Sign of the Talbot, in New Malton’.

Turnpike roads heralded the era of travel by public-service coach, and so the earliest advertisement for a weekly Leeds-Scarborough stagecoach is found in 1755. Initially it ran for the summer sea-bathing season only. Later advertisements specified that the service involved an overnight stop at Malton, most probably at The New Talbot Inn.



The earliest advertisement for a stage-coach service through Malton. Leeds Intelligencer, 1 July 1755. © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to the British Newspaper Archive. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).



## SECOND MARQUESS AND TALBOT OWNER BECOMES PRIME MINISTER



Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, painted in about 1768 by an unknown artist after Sir Joshua Reynolds.  
© The National Portrait Gallery.

**Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, was unexpectedly given the job of prime minister in July 1765.**

King George III had fallen out with the Whig prime minister George Grenville, and Rockingham was called as the surprise replacement, some say for lack of a better candidate. Despite his keen political activism, he had previously neither sought nor attained any government positions. He won widespread acclaim for his honesty and integrity, but was forced to resign after exactly a year, after incurring the displeasure of the king and facing dissent within his cabinet. He was replaced by William Pitt the elder.

## END OF THE BALDOCK ERA

**In 1767, John Baldock wanted to quit The Talbot Inn, but hoped first to recover 'upwards of £500' he had 'laid out in building and making conveniences'.**

He wrote a pleading letter directly to his landlord, cutting out the owner's Malton agent. The address on the letter was simply: 'The Rt Hon. The Marquess of Rockingham in London'. Baldock stated that he and his wife, after serving as tenants for 'a number of years', were not in good health and wished to nominate an un-named replacement who would pay the rent and keep the inn in good repair. The response of the marquess is unknown.



John Baldock's 1767 letter to the Marquess of Rockingham. Image courtesy Sheffield City Archives, ref. Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments WWM-R1-888.

## FIRST SIGNS OF EXPANSION

**After a gap in the records, in 1775 we find that the tenant innkeeper that year, John Powell, was paying an annual rent of £130, compared to the £45 previously paid by John Baldock.**

This seems to fit with other evidence of significant investment in expansion of the inn, which probably coincided with the date of Powell's installation. A drawing by local artist Francis Nicholson (right), published as an engraving in 1794, shows the west wing of The Talbot at its present extended length, with six windows on the first floor, while an estate plan of 1801 (bottom right) shows a further development, the addition of bay windows at the end of the same wing.



The extended Talbot Inn (top left) in a detail from a drawing by Francis Nicholson, engraved by John Walker and published in *The Copper-Plate Magazine* in February 1794. Woodhams Stone Collection, Malton and Norton Heritage Centre, ref. MALWS 2021-1233.

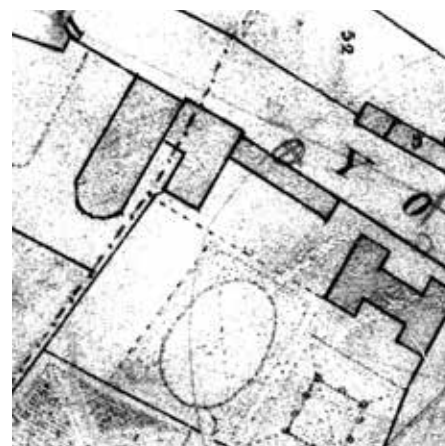
## EARL FITZWILLIAM INHERITS



William Wentworth Fitzwilliam, 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, 1748 - 1833. Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Artist Joseph Grozer; after Sir Joshua Reynolds. Courtesy National Galleries of Scotland. Bequeathed by William Finlay Watson 1886.

**In July 1782, Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, fell victim to a flu pandemic and died, just 14 weeks after he had been appointed prime minister for the second time.**

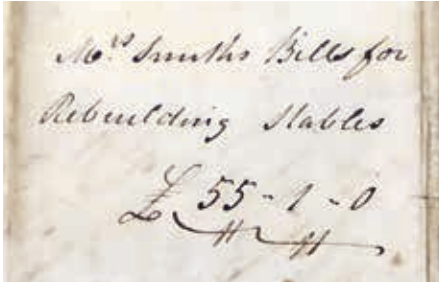
Having no direct heir, his titles including the earldom of Malton became extinct. His estates, worth £40,000 a year, including the Malton estate and The Talbot Inn, were left to his 34-year-old nephew, William Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, who now became the owner of two great fortunes. The earl's existing palatial home of Milton Hall, near Peterborough, was relegated for use as a winter hunting lodge, while the superior Wentworth Woodhouse became his new principal seat.



Recent extensions to the west wing of The Talbot, including the bay windows, are indicated in this 1801 Malton Estate plan by Ralph Burton. North Yorkshire County Record Office (Ref: ZPB III 5/2/1).



## INKEEPER'S DOUBLE BLOW



Cover sheet for charges to Ann Smith. North Yorkshire County Record Office (Ref: ZPB III 5/2/1).

**John Powell was succeeded as innkeeper at The Talbot in 1797 by his son-in-law, Benjamin Harker, who was succeeded in 1800 by Mark Smith and his wife Ann.**

Over the next five years, the couple oversaw the laying of new stone-flag floors in the hall, passages, and kitchens. In February 1806, Mark Smith died aged 40. Ann remained at the inn, but six weeks later there was a dreadful fire at the stables when it was reported that seven or eight horses were burnt to death. Ann was obliged to pay for rebuilding the damaged stables, after which she quit.

## GROWING COACHING TRADE



An early illustration of a Royal Mail coach.

**The new tenant innkeeper at The Talbot in April 1807 was Thomas Husband, who arrived at a time of much excitement in the town and of great prospects for the keeper of the inn.**

One reason for optimism was the continued growth of coach travel, accelerated in recent years by the introduction and rapid expansion of a national network of top-quality Royal Mail coaches. By 1807, there was a mail coach calling daily at The Talbot, departing at 3am to Scarborough, four days a week, and to Whitby on the other three days. The return coach left The Talbot for York every evening at 5pm.

A new service, The True Blue, was launched in July 1807, running during the summer bathing season between Leeds and Scarborough via York and Malton. Its operators boasted 'a new construction, being suspended by grasshopper springs ... [which] prevent friction and jolting'.

A third new service was the York and Malton Diligence, which linked the two destinations on three days a week throughout the year and called at Malton's Black Horse Inn. While the coaching trade was undoubtedly very good for The Talbot, its stables probably did more business through the private hire of horses, carriages, and drivers, by wealthy travellers.



## ‘DISLOYAL’ TENANTS SUFFER BRUTAL ELECTION AFTERMATH

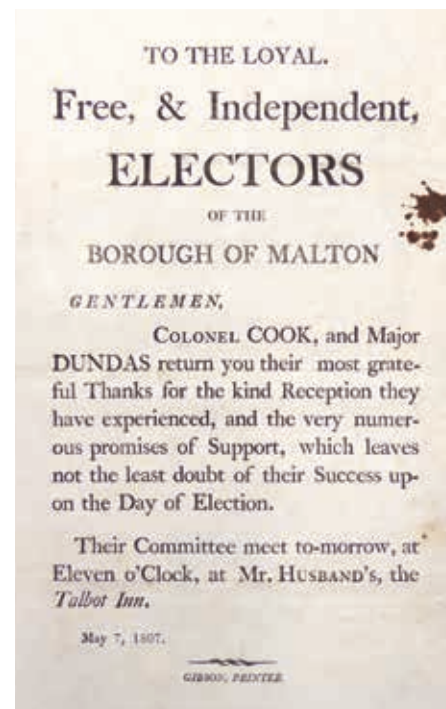
Another reason for excitement at the time of Thomas Husband’s entry into The Talbot in April 1807 was that it coincided with the start of a fiercely contested general election campaign.

It was especially heated because there had been rumblings of discontent among the townsfolk over alleged lack of interest in them by Earl Fitzwilliam, and over the dictatorial and authoritarian style of his Malton agent, William Hastings. The election allowed the electorate to register their dissatisfaction by voting against the earl’s nominees for the town’s two seats in the House of Commons.

Thus, Earl Fitzwilliam’s two nominated Whig-party candidates came up against well-supported opposition from a Tory-party candidate and from a local independent. The Whig campaign was run from The Talbot and seemed set to win both seats, until a tactical move by the independent, who pulled out of the contest. It consolidated votes in opposition to the earl in the camp of the Tory, who consequently polled the second highest number of votes and took the second seat from one of the earl’s men.

The Whigs petitioned for an enquiry, which revealed that the Tory had corruptly paid the independent £500 to withdraw from the contest. As a result, his election was declared void, and a re-run was ordered for the single seat, to be held in March 1808. A furious Earl Fitzwilliam determined that voters who depended on his estate for their homes or livelihoods but failed to cast both their votes for his Whig nominees, would quickly learn the error of their ways.

His agent, William Hastings, obtained the voting records from the official poll book and on instructions from the earl sent the perceived dissidents a range of threatening letters. Among them were eviction notices sent to 140 tenants and under-tenants. Their termination date was set at 25 March 1808, just after the date of the re-run election, thus allowing the tenants to redeem themselves in the nick of time by voting for the earl’s man at the second attempt.



Malton Whig candidates' general election poster, May 1807, North Yorkshire County Record Office (Ref: ZPB III 5/2/1).



## DISSIDENT STAFF DISMISSED

**One of the most astonished recipients of one of William Hastings' threatening letters of 1807 must have been Talbot innkeeper Thomas Husband, who had barely got his feet under the table.**

He was given an ultimatum that unless he immediately sacked three of his employees who had voted in the election against the earl's nominees, he would join the list of those under notice to quit. Husband complied and, at the 1808 re-run election, so did the majority of those under threat of eviction, thus ensuring that the Whig candidate won a sweeping victory. In most cases, notices to quit were withdrawn and replaced by a 25 per cent rent increase, imposed as a deterrent against any future indiscretions.



The street elevation of The Talbot Inn, seen today exactly as it looked after the rebuilding work in 1809, which included a third storey and the addition of an oriel window above the street-side entrance.

## ELEVATION TO THREE STOREYS

**By extreme contrast, Thomas Husband earned a lucrative reward in the form of a huge investment by Earl Fitzwilliam in upgrading and expanding The Talbot.**

A condition survey of the buildings dated April 1807 had revealed that its great chimneys were in a dangerous state. So, after the election in 1808, it was decided to rebuild the roof and chimneys completely, while also taking the opportunity to elevate the whole building to include a new third storey. At the same time, all the oldest buildings in the stables complex, which included coach houses, sheds, barns, granaries, and a brewhouse, were replaced, and walls and paving were repaired. The estimated cost of both projects totalled £1,198.

Earl Fitzwilliam's Malton agent, William Hastings, did not live to see the more extensive work at the inn completed. He died very suddenly in August 1808, aged 55, and was replaced within a month by Samuel Henry Copperthwaite, from Leeds. He commissioned the grand new staircase linking the three floors. The whole project was completed in 1809, from which time The Talbot became more commonly known as a hotel, the new, more fashionable word for an inn of superior character.



A view of the west-facing elevation of The Talbot reveals the changes in brickwork marking the extension, probably constructed shortly after 1767, and the third storey added in 1808/09.



## LAST FLOURISHES OF THE SPA

**The expansion of The Talbot prompted ultimately futile plans to revitalise Malton's attraction as a spa town.**

Formal spa gardens were created along the riverbank, accessible from the hotel meadow garden. And in 1812, plans were drawn for an elegant refreshment room. However, in 1840 a local doctor reported that while a 'handsome pagoda' had been built, the spa had ceased to attract visitors from outside the town, which he thought surprising considering the 'very superior and extensive accommodation at the hotel'. The spring was soon abandoned and today nothing remains of either the pagoda or the gardens.

## VISITS BY CHARLES DICKENS

**In July 1843, the York Herald reported in a single sentence that 'Charles Dickens Esq., the celebrated author of Pickwick, Nicholas Nickleby & co., is now visiting Charles Smithson Esq., at Easthorpe Park, near New Malton'.**

According to a Smithson family tale, Dickens, who was a long-standing friend of Charles Smithson, a Malton solicitor, arrived in the town on a very wet night and could not find a carriage to take him the two and a half miles to Easthorpe Hall, instead making the trip in a hearse. As hearses were typically among the vehicles available to hire from coaching inns, it seems likely that Dickens, then aged 31, came to Malton on the mail coach from York, and on seeking to hire a carriage and driver from The Talbot stables, found that the hearse was the last remaining vehicle.

Dickens returned to the town in April 1844 to attend the funeral of Charles Smithson. He also had other reasons to visit, because between 1844 and 1854 his brother, Alfred Dickens, lived in the town while working as a senior engineer on the construction of the York-Scarborough Railway and the Driffield-Malton-Thirsk Railway. It seems likely that Charles Dickens patronised The Talbot Hotel during his visits, although there is no record of it.

## 5TH EARL FITZWILLIAM

The 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, owner of The Talbot Hotel, died in February 1833, aged 84, and was succeeded by his son, 46-year-old Charles William Wentworth-Fitzwilliam. The 5th earl maintained the principal seat at Wentworth Woodhouse.



Charles William Wentworth Fitzwilliam, 5th Earl Fitzwilliam, by William Ward, after and published by John Raphael Smith, mezzotint, June 1808. © National Portrait Gallery.



Charles Dickens in 1839. An engraving by William Finden of a painting by Daniel Maclise.

## RAILWAYS SIGNAL THE END OF THE COACHING TRADE

**CHEAP EXCURSION TRAIN TO MALTON RACES:**  
Will leave Leeds on *Thursday, April 22nd*, at Nine o'clock in the Morning.

| FARES THERE AND BACK. |            |            |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| 3rd Class.            | 2nd Class. | 1st Class. |
| 3s. 6d.               | 4s. 6d.    | 6s. 6d.    |

Will return from Malton at Seven o'clock the same evening.  
First Class Passengers can return on Friday evening, at 4.55.  
Also from YORK to MALTON RACES, on *Thursday and Friday, April 22nd and 23rd*. Fares Low.

Bradford Observer, 15 April 1852.

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[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

The York-Scarborough railway, which opened in July 1845, also had a branch line to Pickering that completed a connection to Whitby.

Mary Kimberley, who had been running The Talbot Hotel since 1829, responded by positioning a horse-drawn omnibus at Malton station to meet every train and bring guests the third of a mile to the hotel. If the omnibus was needed to pick up departing guests, it was summoned from the station by a loud blast on a bugle from the lofty position of the hotel terrace. Kimberley retired in April 1847.

It was in the time of innkeeper Ann Barker that in May 1853 the Drifffield-Malton-Thirsk Railway opened, creating connections to Hull, Bridlington, and the main London-Edinburgh line. It was the end of the road for coach services through Malton.

### 6TH EARL FITZWILLIAM

The 5th Earl Fitzwilliam died in 1857, aged 71, and was succeeded by his son, William Thomas Spencer Wentworth-Fitzwilliam. The 6th earl did not inherit the Fitzwilliam seat of Milton Hall near Peterborough, which was left to his younger brother, George, but he was left the family's principal seat of Wentworth Woodhouse, where during his life the rapid expansion of the estate's coal mines would bring vast new riches into his coffers.

## THE WIZARD OF THE NORTH

The railways brought more visitors to Malton Races, at a time when the town's reputation as a national centre for the sport was at its height.

This was mainly thanks to the extraordinary success of trainer John Scott, of the Whitewall Stables, who between 1827 and 1863 trained 40 winners of the five English flat-racing classics – Epsom's Derby and Oaks, Newmarket's 2,000 guineas and 1,000 guineas, and Doncaster's St Leger, earning Scott the nickname The Wizard of the North.



## TROUBLES FOR MALTON RACES

**John Scott's triumphs were matched by a disaster for the town when in 1862 the new owner of a large part of Langton Wold shut the racecourse and ploughed the ground, bringing down the curtain on probably 200 years of horseracing at Malton.**

A leading Malton trainer, William l'Anson, called a crisis meeting at The Talbot Hotel in 1866, which led the following year to the opening of a new steeplechase course on Malton's Orchard Fields. But it was of limited success. The meetings ceased after 1870.

## TALBOT SAVED FROM CLOSURE

**The end of Malton Races in 1870 happened in the same year in which Edward Rose, The Talbot's tenant innkeeper and a prominent wine merchant, was preparing to quit the hotel.**

Earl Fitzwilliam considered an idea by his Malton agent, Charles William Copperthwaite, that the best days of The Talbot may be over, and the opportunity should be taken to close it and redevelop it as two private houses, while a new, better-located hotel could be built next to the railway station.

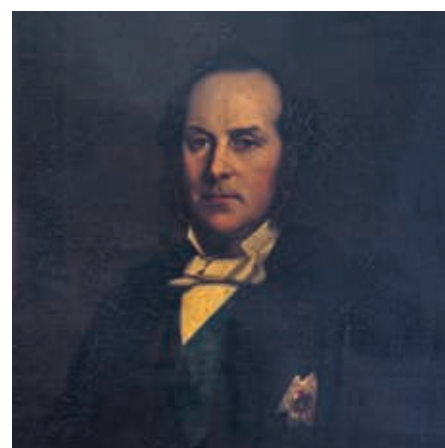
However, in June 1871 a paragon of the Malton racing community stepped forward to make sure that The Talbot continued its historic service as the sporting social hub of the town.

John Hammond Peart, aged 53, became the new tenant innkeeper after serving for 26 years as stable manager and right-hand-man to the famous Malton trainer, John Scott, who had just retired. Peart was a well-known, popular, genial character, and a leading figure in racing in his own right, having also been clerk of the racecourses at Pontefract and Ripon, as well as being a racehorse owner and a gentleman jockey.

Peart took The Talbot on a promise by Earl Fitzwilliam's agent that the hotel would be improved by the development of a smoke room and the building of an extension to house a billiard room. Peart remained in charge until 1879.



The billiard room, erected in 1871, is seen here as the hip-roofed extension with three tall windows, built on top of a storeroom. The smoke room, developed at the same time, was created in an existing space to the left of the Yorkersgate entrance to the hotel.



William Thomas Spencer Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, 6th Earl Fitzwilliam, copy by John Lewis Reilly after Henry Weigall the younger. Image courtesy of Collection of Heritage Doncaster, Doncaster Mansion House.

## APPEALING TO HUNTERS



Sporting Gazette, 6 March 1886.

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The new tenant innkeeper appointed in 1879 was George Fitchett, a Londoner and former commercial traveller in the wool trade.

Although lacking the northern roots and horseracing credentials of his predecessor, Fitchett became an active member of the local community, and he maintained the reputation of The Talbot as the social centre for the leading figures in Malton's sporting fraternity. Press advertisements promoted The Talbot as an ideal hotel for the hunting season, there being meets in the neighbourhood held daily.



William l'Anson pictured in The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, 20 October 1906.

© Illustrated London News Group/Mary Evans Picture Library.

## TOWN HERO WILLIAM l'ANSON

Unofficially supporting Fitchett during his seven-year tenure was William l'Anson junior, who through his patronage of The Talbot helped maintain its reputation as the sporting hub of the town.

He was the son of the William l'Anson, who had briefly resurrected Malton Races and who died in January 1881, aged 70. William l'Anson junior carried on his father's business as a racehorse trainer, but this was not his only sporting interest. The Sportsman newspaper remarked in 1887 that he was:

'a great favourite in Malton and the neighbourhood, for being a good all-round man at almost every sport that can be mentioned, he not only patronises but literally supports every kind of pastime in which the inhabitants participate'.

It was probably lobbying by William l'Anson that persuaded Earl Fitzwilliam to have a bowling green laid out on land at The Talbot Hotel. The exact date is unclear, but the earliest recorded match was held there in 1887, between the clubs of Malton Town and The Talbot. William l'Anson was a leading player in The Talbot's team for that match, and he remained so for the club's matches in years to follow.

## MALTON RACES REVIVED AGAIN

**One of William l'Anson's major sporting initiatives was a second revival of Malton Races, which he organised, like his father before him, after a meeting of owners, breeders, and trainers at The Talbot Hotel.**

The new steeplechase course, at l'Anson's Highfield House training ground, opened in March 1882. It continued for 22 years until, for unknown reasons, l'Anson's principal patron insisted the races should cease. The last meeting was in 1904, after which there were no further attempts to resurrect racing at Malton. William l'Anson left Malton in 1909 to set up a training venture in Newmarket for the benefit of his son.



The woman in this photograph from around the turn of the 20th century is probably Talbot innkeeper Mrs Ellen Knight. Reproduced courtesy the Woodhams Stone Collection, Malton and Norton Heritage Centre, ref. MALWS 2018-800.



William "Billy" Charles de Meuron Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam, photographed in 1896 by Alexander Bassano, © National Portrait Gallery.

### IMPOSTER CLAIM QUASHED

Talbot owner, the 6th Earl Fitzwilliam, died aged 86 in February 1902, when his estates were valued at £2.8 million. His successor was his grandson, 29-year-old William "Billy" Charles de Meuron Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, whose father, a North American explorer, had died when Billy was aged four. Billy successfully quashed claims by relatives that his unregistered birth, in a remote frontiersman's house in Canada, raised suspicions that he was an imposter, a common settler's son, switched at birth for his father's unwanted baby girl.



## TALBOT'S NEGLECT AND DECLINE

### LORD MILTON IN MALTON

From 1933, the 7th Earl Fitzwilliam's 23-year-old son and heir, William Henry Lawrence Peter Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, known as Peter, and holder of the courtesy title Lord Milton, came to live at The Croft, Old Malton, about a mile from his racehorses, which were being trained at Walter Easterby's Grove House stables.

**From about 1910, the increasingly common appearance of motor cars on public roads should have heralded the beginning of a new period of prosperity for The Talbot.**

But the interruptions of the Great War (1914-18) followed by the Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s prevented the necessary investment to meet the changing needs of modern guests. Electric lighting was installed, but little else was done. Despite the best efforts of successive tenant innkeepers, it becomes clear that the hotel entered a period of neglect and decline.

## PRESSURES OF WORLD WAR TWO

**After the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, several premises in Malton were requisitioned by the army, including The Talbot Hotel's decaying stables complex.**

And there were also military demands on the Fitzwilliam family. In 1942, the bulk of the earl's 365-room home of Wentworth Woodhouse was requisitioned for the Army Intelligence Corps. The family had to withdraw to a 40-room suite at the back of the house, where in February 1943, the earl died, aged 70. His 32-year-old son, Peter Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, a peacetime resident of Old Malton, became the 8th Earl, while he was still serving on secret missions for the army's Special Operations Executive.

War didn't delay the demand for death duties, calculated in 1944 by a full valuation of the Fitzwilliam estates. A report on The Talbot confirmed that the stables and carriage houses were 'dilapidated' and that the 16 letting bedrooms had no wash basins. There was no centralised heating system anywhere in the building. The billiard room had been converted to a second dining room. The innkeeper, Harry Grant, had been in post for 19 years, and it was recommended that any improvement in the business would require 'an enterprising tenant'.



## POST-WAR EXPANSION

**In 1946, at the beginning of the post-war economic recovery, The Talbot was leased for 50 years to Trust Houses Ltd, the country's first, and then its only, major national hotel chain.**

The company refurbished and expanded The Talbot, incorporating adjacent properties - two small houses on the roadside elevation, and behind them a large private house called The Cloisters, which during the war had been requisitioned by the army. The additions increased the public spaces and the number of bedrooms, which went up from 16 to 26, making the whole enterprise a more viable proposition.



The Talbot viewed from the river side, with on the right the former private house called The Cloisters, now a bedroom wing of the hotel.

## TRAGIC DEATHS OF TWO EARLS

**In May 1948, Peter Wentworth Fitzwilliam, the 8th Earl Fitzwilliam, was killed when his privately hired aircraft fell out of the sky during a violent storm over the south of France.**

Also killed in the crash were the two crew and the earl's lover, Katherine 'Kit' Cavendish, the 28-year-old sister of future US president, John F Kennedy, and widow of the Marquess of Hartington. Having no son, the earl's title passed to a cousin, 64-year-old Eric Spencer Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, who was a grandson of the 6th earl. Divorced, childless, and an unreformed alcoholic, the lonely 9th earl lived in the 40-room wing of Wentworth Woodhouse, while the rest of it was let as a teacher training college.

The 9th earl died in April 1952 when the title of 10th Earl Fitzwilliam went to another cousin, William Thomas George 'Tom' Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, aged 47. He was a great-grandson of the 5th earl, and by his line of direct descent had inherited Milton Hall, near Peterborough, which he made his principal seat. He retained the suite at Wentworth Woodhouse for occasional use when visiting the estate.



Tom Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, 10th Earl Fitzwilliam, photographed in 1955 by Walter Stoneman  
© National Portrait Gallery.

## NAYLOR-LEYLAND INHERITANCE

### BY-PASS RELIEF

The popularity of motoring between the industrial West Riding and the seaside resorts of Scarborough and Whitby, brought more traffic to Malton than the town could stand.

A town-centre road junction and the level crossing of the busy York-Scarborough railway line meant that on summer weekends it could take an hour and a half to get through the town, and considerably more over bank holidays. But decades of plans for a by-pass were shelved by successive governments on grounds of cost.

Not until December 1978 was a road avoiding the town finally opened, and Malton once again became an attractive visitor destination, where retail and hospitality outlets started to enjoy increasing levels of trade.

**Tom Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, the 10th earl Fitzwilliam, died in September 1979, aged 75, without children or any male heir, meaning that the earldom and all its associated titles became extinct.**

The earl's widow, Joyce Elizabeth, Countess Fitzwilliam, was left the estates, estimated at that time to be worth about £20 million. In 1986, Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham, the former principal seat of the Fitzwilliam family, ceased to be used as a teacher training college. It was sold in 1989 to a businessman and is currently being restored by a preservation trust, which has opened it to the public.

Following the death of Countess Fitzwilliam in 1995, aged 97, and that of her daughter from a previous marriage, Lady Elizabeth Anne Hastings, in 1997, aged 63, the Fitzwilliam estates passed to Lady Hastings' son from her previous marriage, Sir Philip Vyvian Naylor-Leyland, 4th baronet. His inheritance included the principal Fitzwilliam seat of Milton Hall, near Peterborough, and the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate, including The Talbot Hotel.



Milton Hall, near Peterborough, formerly the principal seat of Tom Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, the 10th Earl Fitzwilliam, and now of Sir Philip Naylor-Leyland, the current owner of the Fitzwilliam estates, including The Talbot Hotel. Image courtesy Milton Hall.



## MALTON FOOD FESTIVAL

Sir Phillip Naylor-Leyland's son and heir, Tom, began a campaign to promote Malton as a centre where the region's small, artisan food-producers could flourish. In 2009, the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate sponsored the town's first annual street festival of food, which has since grown into a three-day event attracting crowds of 40,000 visitors. Its success prompted celebrity chef Antonio Carluccio, to declare Malton to be 'Yorkshire's food capital'.

## HOTEL'S £4M REFURBISHMENT

As part of the promotion of Malton as a food capital, in 2010 the opportunity was taken to bring The Talbot Hotel under the direct management of the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate and to embark on a £4 million refurbishment of the building. The work lasted 18 months, leading to a reopening in April 2012. Celebrity chef James Martin, a native of Malton, oversaw the hotel's menus for the following three years.

## TALBOT YARD FOOD COURT

The derelict Talbot stables complex was restored and redeveloped by the Fitzwilliam Malton Estate in 2015 to form the Talbot Yard Food Court – a vibrant centre of manufacture and retail sales for artisan food-producers. In 2020, The Talbot Hotel was leased to the specialist hotel operator, the Coaching Inn Group, which is focused on meeting the needs of the modern market, while also dedicated to maintaining and preserving the heritage of its hotels.



Malton Food Festival in full swing. Image courtesy Visit Malton, [www.visitmalton.com](http://www.visitmalton.com).



The Talbot Yard Food Court in the hotel's former stables complex. Image courtesy Visit Malton, [www.visitmalton.com](http://www.visitmalton.com).

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Our vision for the future is based around our core value of 'Unlocking Potential'. From our properties to our people and everything in between, we take every opportunity to invest in developing all aspects of our business to give our guests the best possible experience.

As a company we are rapidly expanding and bringing new hotels into the Coaching Inn Group. You can see the latest additions to our group by visiting [www.coachinginngroup.co.uk](http://www.coachinginngroup.co.uk).

We hope you've enjoyed your visit to The Talbot Hotel, Malton, and would love to invite you to try our other venues, nationwide. For full details please visit [www.coachinginngroup.co.uk](http://www.coachinginngroup.co.uk).



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